



CONNECTICUT CENTER  
FOR PATIENT SAFETY  
QUALITY HEALTHCARE IS A RIGHT.

**Senate Bill 1189 An Act Requiring Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Companies to Disclose Incentives Provided to Health Care Providers.** –

**Why would Pharmaceuticals spend \$12 to \$18 billion on marketing to doctors if they didn't think the money would influence the physician?** Journal of the American Medical Association, September 7, 2006.

New and expensive drugs are heavily promoted to physicians in slick and expensive advertising campaigns. The most effective promotion is through pharmaceutical detailing - a marketing tactic that involves individual sale reps meeting with doctors in their offices to promote specific medications. Detailing is a multi billion dollar business employing tens of thousand of sales reps. Indeed there is one detailer for every eight doctors in the United States. Growing interest in regulating marketing activities comes four years after the industry updated its voluntary code restricting lavish gifts. The AMA has asked doctors to voluntarily stop taking gifts. But voluntary has not worked; we need to do what they seem unable to do on their own by requiring pharmaceutical companies to report their gifts to physicians. **This provides no burden to the doctor; it is strictly reporting by the drug companies.**

Pharmaceutical companies devote an enormous amount of money each year to influence physicians prescribing practices. It is over 2 billion dollars and while each one of us does not believe a sales rep and not the quality of the drug would influence our own doctor, the reality is if it didn't work they would not be spending this money.

At least nine states are considering bans this year. In New England, Mass, New Hampshire, CT and New York could join Maine and Vermont in passing this important legislation. What we are asking for is the pharmaceuticals to give transparency to their gift giving practices by mandatory reporting. The growth of the marketing by the industry must be matched by increased oversight. This is only fair to the consumer.

In the last ten years the numbers of drugs has increased dramatically, the numbers of drugs each health care consumer takes on a regular basis is on the rise and the dollars spent on marketing by the pharmaceuticals has skyrocketed

Just to give you a few statistics In 2005, 75 % of all Americans over 65 took roughly 4 prescription drugs on a daily basis and the average 75 year old swallowed eight different prescriptions daily.

Some 3.6 billion prescriptions were purchased in the United States in 2005 according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. That is a 70 percent increase from ten years earlier,

To say that the marketing and use of prescription drugs is big business is an understatement. But we seem to be spiraling out of control. The marketing we see as consumers –the direct marketing to us such as restless leg syndrome, erectile dysfunction, insomnia, bladder control to name just a few are just ten percent of the pharmaceuticals marketing dollar. A comprehensive study showed that 85% of physicians will give a patient a drug he or she requests. But that is just the beginning of the problem. 90% of the pharmaceuticals marketing dollar is directed at doctors. This is not just a free lunch – indeed each physician on a national average has over \$8,000 in gifts directed at him each year.

Pharmaceutical companies direct marketing steers doctors prescribing practices. New and costly drugs are explosively introduced. Older and even better drugs or less expensive alternatives are often left behind. The manipulation of consumer and physician demand increases expenditure and in the end puts stress on our health care system.

Simply put, if marketing wasn't working, why would the industry continue to do it?

Jean Rexford  
Executive Director  
203 247 5757